**SERMON OUTLINE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SERMON TITLE:** | The Meanest Member in Our Church |
| **SERMON REFERENCE:** | James 3:1-12 |
| **LWF SERMON NUMBER:** | #0517 |
|  |  |
| We are grateful for the opportunity to provide this outline produced from a sermon preached by Adrian Rogers while serving as pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. This outline is intended for your personal, non-commercial use.  In order to ensure our ability to be good stewards of Adrian Rogers’ messages, Love Worth Finding has reserved all rights to this content.  Except for your personal, non-commercial use and except for brief quotations in printed reviews, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means —electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other— without the prior permission of the publisher.  Copyright ©2019 Love Worth Finding Ministries, Inc. | |

1. INTRODUCTION
   1. James 3:1-12
      1. James 3:1 cautions us not to thoughtlessly or carelessly become a religious teacher because one day, what we teach will come under close scrutiny of the judgment of God.
   2. In James 3:6, we learn that the meanest member in our churches is the tongue.
      1. The tongue is a fire and a world of iniquity.
   3. James mentions specifically three things about the tongue, which we will study today.
2. THE influence of the tongue (james 3:3-5)
   1. The tongue, though very small, is also very powerful and influential and should be handled with care.
   2. The tongue can direct, destroy and delight.
   3. James illustrates the power of the tongue by showing us three small things that have great influence.
      1. The tongue is like a bit in a horse’s mouth.
         1. James 3:3
         2. A small, petite person can direct a powerful horse with just a little piece of metal in the horse’s mouth.
            1. A very small bit can control the whole horse.
         3. James is stating that just a small word can sometimes control the destiny of a person.
      2. The tongue is like a rudder on a mighty ship.
         1. James 3:4
         2. Just a little rudder can change the direction of a mighty ship.
            1. The same is true regarding the power of our speech.

Countless lives have been blessed and brought to the Lord Jesus Christ through the speech of Gospel ministers.

Adolph Hitler whipped the people of Germany into a frenzy with his demonical and maniacal speeches.

* + - * 1. The power of the tongue, like the rudder of a ship, can bring a ship that’s been tossed by the waves and wind into a safe harbor.
        2. The power of the tongue, under the control of a wrong person, can bring the ship of life upon the rocks and reefs of disaster and destruction.
      1. We should never underestimate the power of the tongue.
    1. The tongue is like a spark in dry grass.
       1. James 3:5
       2. We need to be careful how we use our tongue because it is like a torch.
          1. A fire does not have to be great and large to begin with.
          2. A small fire can become a big fire, and a few words wrongly used can bring devastation and destruction.
       3. Fire can be a wonderful servant.
          1. We wouldn’t have civilization as we know it without fire.
       4. But fire is a poor master.
       5. Fire can warm, or fire can burn.
          1. Words can bless, or words can curse.
          2. Words can warm a heart, or words can inflame hatred.

Words can cause a chain reaction.

* 1. We need to handle our tongue with care because we will one day give an account for every idle word that we speak.
     1. Matthew 12:36

1. the iniquity of the tongue (james 3:6-8)
   1. James uses several figures of speech to describe the iniquity of the tongue.
      1. The tongue defiles like a broken sewer.
         1. James 3:6
            1. It defiles the whole body.
         2. The tongue pollutes like a broken sewer pipe.
            1. The greatest ecological problem in America today is the problem of wrongly used words that defile the whole body.
         3. This includes using filthy, dirty speech.
            1. We need to beware of being a “gutter mouth.”
      2. The tongue destroys like an arsonist.
         1. James 3:6
         2. There are those who deliberately, hurtfully and hatefully use their tongues to destroy the lives of others.
         3. Proverbs 16:27-28
         4. There are people who wouldn’t think of using vulgar language, but they gossip and criticize.
      3. The tongue devours like a wild beast.
         1. James 3:7-8
         2. The tongue is like a wild, ferocious and untamable beast.
         3. Words hurt.
         4. Galatians 5:15
            1. It seems strange that Paul would have to write this to Christians; Christians who are consuming one another like ferocious animals, biting and destroying one another.
      4. The tongue deadens like a vile poison.
         1. James 3:8
         2. We can poison and kill with our tongue.
            1. Proverbs 18:21
         3. We can assassinate someone’s character with our words.
         4. We should never utter reckless words against any servant of Christ or idly repeat slanderous darts being hurled at others.
   2. We need to remember that we will one day stand before Almighty God and give an account.
      1. Matthew 12:36-37
      2. As Christians, we will give an account, not in condemnation, but at the judgment seat of Christ.
2. the inconsistency of the tongue (james 3:9-12)
   1. Many of us love the Lord, and yet we are inconsistent with our lives.
      1. Many of us are inconsistent in the use of our tongues.
   2. James is stating that these inconsistencies are impossible in the physical, natural world.
      1. A spring cannot yield salt water and fresh water at the same time.
      2. An olive tree will not bear figs.
   3. What is impossible in the physical world ought not to be in the spiritual world.
      1. It is improper in the spiritual world.
      2. It is improper for us to go to church and praise God on Sunday and then leave and criticize our brothers and sisters in Christ.
         1. We shouldn’t go from blessing God to criticizing men.
            1. We cannot bless God and curse men at the same time.
      3. If we love God, then we should let it be shown in our speech toward others.
      4. We should be consistent.
3. CONCLUSION
   1. What do we do about the problem of the tongue?
      1. The Bible says that if a man can bridle his own tongue, then he is a mature man.
         1. James 3:2
      2. The Bible also says that no man can tame the tongue.
         1. James 3:8
      3. These two Scriptures are not contradicting one another.
         1. James is saying that we cannot tame the tongue.
            1. We cannot control our speech and tame our tongue apart from the help of the Holy Spirit of God.
      4. It is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.
         1. Matthew 12:34
         2. What is in the root of the tree will show in the fruit of the tree.
   2. If we are to control our tongues, then we must control our hearts.
      1. While it is the bit that controls the horse, there is someone who holds the reins.
         1. Who is the person holding the reins in your life?
            1. Is it self or the Holy Spirit?
   3. The only way we can have peace in our homes is to control the tongue, and the only way to control the tongue is to be born again.
      1. Only God can cleanse our hearts and make the tongue behave.
      2. We cannot make the tongue behave any more than we could save ourselves.
   4. When you give your heart to Jesus, your tongue can be tamed by the blessed, wonderful Spirit of God.
   5. Have you been saved? Do you know the Lord Jesus personally?
      1. If not, you can pray to Him today and ask Him to come into your life.
   6. Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
      1. Romans 3:23
      2. Romans 10:9-10
      3. Romans 10:13
      4. Acts 16:31
      5. John 3:16